

The Earliest Eternal Sealings for Civilly Married Couples Living and Dead

Gary James Bergera¹

[I]f I can have my wives and children with me in the morning of the resurrection, . . . it will amply repay me for the trials and tribulations I may have had to pass through in the course of my life here upon the earth.

Wilford Woodruff, 1883 (*Journal of Discourses*, 24:244)

DURING THE EARLY 1840s, founding Mormon prophet Joseph Smith introduced members of his young church to the ordinances of baptism for the dead (1840), eternal marriage (1841), and eternal proxy marriage (1842). These ordinances, and the doctrine underpinning them, united Smith's beliefs in obedience to divine law, the importance of mortality, and the eternal nature of the family. Baptism for the dead guaranteed deceased relatives (and friends)² membership in Christ's church; eternal marriage united living husbands and wives after death; and proxy marriage linked spouses to their deceased partners. These three ordinances, Mormons believed, effectively realized the promise of Smith's celestial "kinship-based covenant system."³ Later, the rituals of the endowment and

Copyright the Smith-Pettit Foundation.

1. I appreciate the advice of Lavina Fielding Anderson, M. Guy Bishop, Todd Compton, Lyndon W. Cook, William G. Hartley, H. Michael Marquardt, and George D. Smith.

2. For example, Don Carlos Smith, Joseph Smith's brother, was baptized for George Washington (see D. Michael Quinn, "The Practice of Rebaptism at Nauvoo," *BYU Studies* 18 [Winter 1978]: 229).

3. The term is Rex Eugene Cooper's in his *Promises Made to the Fathers: Mormon Covenant Organization* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1980), 108.

second anointing would more fully define exaltation, while, after Smith's death, adoption sealings would join entire "sealed" families in an expanding web of eternally procreative relationships.⁴ "[T]hat same sociality which exists among us here," Smith taught, "will exist among us there [in heaven], only it will be coupled with eternal glory" (D&C 130:2). Because of these sealing ordinances, "the 'family of God' became more than metaphor."⁵

For Smith's disciples, the efficacy of their prophet's sealings depended on the source of his authority. In 1830 the Book of Mormon referred to "power, that whatsoever ye shall seal on earth shall be sealed in heaven" (Hel. 10:7). The next year Smith elaborated that "the order of the High-priesthood is that they have power given them to seal up the Saints unto eternal life."⁶ This sealing power, Smith taught, fulfilled the prophecy Moroni made to him in 1823: "Behold, I will reveal unto you the Priesthood, by the hand of Elijah the prophet, before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord. And he shall plant in the hearts of the children the promises made to the fathers; and the hearts of the children shall turn to their fathers. If it were not so, the whole earth would be utterly wasted at his coming" (D&C 2:1-3). Thirteen years later, the prophet Elijah conveyed this authority to Smith, announcing, "[T]he keys of this dispensation are committed into your hands; and by this ye may know that the great and dreadful day of the Lord is near, even at the doors" (D&C 110:16). Smith subsequently explained:

The earth will be smitten with a curse, unless there is a welding link. . . between the fathers and the children. . . . For we without them cannot be made perfect; neither can they without us be made perfect. Neither can they nor we be made perfect without those who have died in the gospel also; for it is necessary in the ushering in of the dispensation of the fulness of times. . . that a whole and complete and perfect union, and welding together of dispensations, and keys, and powers, and glories should take place, and be revealed from the days of Adam even to present time. (D&C 128:18)

While Christ's coming would utterly waste the disobedient from the

4. These adoptions were performed after Smith's death and, according to Glen M. Leonard, "involved sons [i.e., usually husbands and fathers] who chose an apostle as a substitute parent in order to ensure a worthy lineage for him and his family" (*Nauvoo: A Place of Peace, A People of Promise* [Salt Lake City/Provo, Utah: Deseret Book Co./Brigham Young University Press, 2002], 264). Such adoptions to church leaders ceased in 1894. See also note 98 below.

5. Gordon Irving, "The Law of Adoption: One Phase of the Development of the Mormon Concept of Salvation, 1830-1900," *BYU Studies* 14 (Spring 1974): 294.

6. Qtd. in Donald Q. Cannon and Lyndon W. Cook, eds., *Far West Record: Minutes of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1830-1844* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1983), 20-21. See also D&C 68:2, 12.

earth, Smith perceived an equally cursed state for the righteous: Without an eternal sealing, they would remain forever celibate and sterile, their ultimate destiny one of barrenness. "[I]n order to obtain the highest [of the three heavens or degrees]," he explained, "a man must enter into this order of the priesthood [meaning the new and everlasting covenant of marriage]; And if he does not, he cannot obtain it" (D&C 131:2-3).

With the founding of Smith's Church of Christ in April 1830, only baptisms performed under his authority were considered valid (D&C 22). Questions remained as to the baptisms of converts' ancestors, and in July 1838 Smith implied that the dead are under the same requirements as the living regarding the ordinances of salvation, including baptism and even marriage.⁷ However, not until August 1840, after the church had relocated to Nauvoo, Illinois, did he announce that followers "could now act for their friends who had departed this life, and that the plan of salvation was calculated to save all who were willing to obey the requirements of God."⁸ "I have laid the subject of baptism for the dead before you," he proclaimed, "you may receive or reject it as you choose."⁹ The next month a woman, recently widowed, asked a male acquaintance to baptize her for a son who had died before joining the church. Though the ordinance was performed without Smith's knowledge, when he learned what had been said during the ceremony, he ruled that the officiator "had it right."¹⁰

Soon, many other Mormons, fearing for their ancestors' eternal souls, began wading into the muddy waters of the Mississippi River, and subsequent baptisms for the dead were performed with little attention to record-keeping and other formalities. "Faithful Saints simply identified their deceased relatives for whom they wished to be baptized," notes M. Guy Bishop, "and then performed the rite."¹¹ Early Mormon apostle Wilford Woodruff remembered:

7. See *Elders' Journal* 1 (July 1838): 43.

8. Qtd. in Simon Baker, Statement, in *Journal History*, 15 August 1840, Archives, Historical Department, Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City, Utah; hereafter LDS Archives. For the origins of the Mormon practice of baptism for the dead, see M. Guy Bishop, "'What Has Become of Our Fathers?' Baptism for the Dead at Nauvoo," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 23 (Summer 1990): 85-97.

9. Qtd. in Jane Neymon [also Neyman, Nyman], Statement, 15 August 1840, in *Journal History*.

10. Qtd. in Baker, Statement; see also the statement attached inside the front of "Baptisms for the Dead, Book A," qtd. in Ileen Ann Waspe, "The Status of Woman in the Philosophy of Mormonism from 1830 to 1845," master's thesis, Brigham Young University, May 1942, 127-28.

11. Bishop, "Baptism for the Dead," 87.

Joseph Smith himself. . . went into the Mississippi River one Sunday night after meeting and baptized a hundred. I baptized another hundred. The next man, a few rods from me, baptized another hundred. We were strung up and down the Mississippi, baptizing for our dead. But there was no recorder, we attended to this ordinance without waiting to have a proper record made. But the Lord told Joseph he must have a recorder present at these baptisms—men who could see with their eyes and hear with their ears, and record these things. Of course, we had to do the work over again. Nevertheless, that does not say the work was not of God.¹²

Throughout 1841, Smith's adherents performed nearly 7,000 such baptisms; during the same period, Nauvoo's adult population numbered 4,000. Smith tried to monitor the practice but eventually decided in October 1841: "There shall be no more baptisms for the dead, until the ordinance can be attended to in the Lord's House [i.e., the Nauvoo temple]. . . .*For thus said the Lord!*"¹³ The new temple would facilitate a more orderly administration of the rite, and workers quickly completed a temporary font, which they placed in the unfinished basement. The following month, three apostles performed the first proxy baptisms in the temple for "about forty persons."¹⁴ Official records are incomplete, but from 1840 to 1844 Smith's followers baptized at least 11,506 of their dead.¹⁵

While the church's priesthood holders had been performing civil marriages since the early 1830s,¹⁶ Smith believed that marriage, like baptism, required an eternal sealing to survive death:

12. Qtd. in *Deseret Weekly*, 25 April 1891, 554.

13. Joseph Smith et al., *History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Period I. History of Joseph Smith, the Prophet by Himself*, vols. 1-6, ed. B. H. Roberts (Salt Lake City: LDS Church/Deseret Book Co., 1902-12), 4:426.

14. *Ibid.*, 446, 454.

15. Bishop, "Baptism for the Dead," 95. "At noon," wrote William Clayton in late 1844, "we had some conversation concerning recorders for the Baptism of our dead &c. We feel very anxious on the matter but have little prospect of anything being done very speedily. I feel very anxious on the subject myself, in as much as the Records of our Baptisms for our dead have not been kept in order for near 2 years back. The minutes have been kept on loose slips of paper and are liable to be lost and they have not been kept according to the order of God" (George D. Smith, *An Intimate Chronicle: The Journals of William Clayton* [Salt Lake City: Signature Books in association with Smith Research Associates, 1991], 152). During this early period, baptisms for the dead, endowments, second anointings, sealings, and adoptions were all first recorded on small slips of paper (or in personal diaries) and then usually—but not always—transferred to a more formal record book.

16. See M. Scott Bradshaw, "Joseph Smith's Performance of Marriages in Ohio," *BYU Studies* 39 (2000), 4:23-69; Scott H. Faulring, "Early Marriages Performed by the Latter-day Saint Elders in Jackson County, Missouri, 1832-1834," *Mormon Historical Studies* 2 (Fall 2001): 197-210; and Lyndon W. Cook, comp., *Nauvoo Deaths and Marriages, 1839-1845* (Orem, Utah: Grandin Book Co., 1994).

All covenants, oaths, vows, performances, connections, associations, or expectations that are not made and entered into and sealed by the Holy Spirit of promise, of him who is anointed, . . . are of no efficacy, virtue, or force in and after the resurrection from the dead. . . . Therefore, if a man marry him a wife in the world, and he marry her not by me nor by my word, and he covenant with her so long as he is in the world and she with him, their covenant and marriage are not of force when they are dead, and when they are out of the world; therefore, they are not bound by any law when they are out of the world. (D&C 132:7, 15)

“[T]he Prophet felt,” LDS educator Danel W. Bachman concluded, “that only those who had his approval could properly exercise the religious ordinance [of marriage], and that he could void marriages that were not valid in eternity.”¹⁷

Still, Smith delayed introducing eternal marriage, knowing that such sealings for the living presumed sealings for the dead, and that both presumed polygamy, at least after death. One of Smith’s early apostles explained,

[I]f the Lord had considered it wisdom [in the mid-1830s] to come forward and reveal to the children of men. . . . that, without the law of sealing, no man could be exalted to a throne in the celestial kingdom, had He revealed this simple sentiment, up would have jumped some man, saying, “What! got to have a woman sealed to me in order to be saved, in order to be exalted to thrones, dominions, and eternal increase?” “Yes.” “I do not believe a word of it. I cannot stand that, for I never intended to get married, I do not believe in any of this nonsense.” At the same time, perhaps somebody else might have had faith to receive it. Again up jumps somebody else, “Brother Joseph, I have had two wives in my lifetime, cannot I have them both in eternity?” “No.” If he had said yes, perhaps we should all have apostatized at once.¹⁸

Perhaps because eternal marriage sealings presumed polygamy, Smith’s first authorized marriage sealing united, not civilly married spouses, but Smith and his first documented plural wife, Louisa Beaman. In fact, plural marriage—known among early participants as celestial marriage—represented the highest order, the *ne plus ultra*, of Smith’s teachings on eternal or patriarchal marriage. “The domestic order established by matrimonial sealing,” concluded LDS researcher Rex Eugene Cooper, “place[d] the wife perpetually under her husband’s jurisdiction, even though they participate jointly in exaltation. . . . As an aspect of the

17. Danel W. Bachman, “A Study of the Mormon Practice of Plural Marriage before the Death of Joseph Smith,” master’s thesis, Purdue University, 1975, 127.

18. George A. Smith, Discourse, 18 March 1855, in *Journal of Discourses*, 26 vols. (Liverpool, Eng.: Latter-day Saints’ Book Depot, 1855-86), 2:216.

marriage ceremony, the husband received priesthood keys that gave him 'patriarchal' authority over his wife."¹⁹ Early polygamist William Clayton testified, "From him [i.e., Smith], I learned that the doctrine of plural and celestial marriage is the most holy and important doctrine ever revealed to man on the earth, and that without obedience to that principle no man can ever attain to the fulness of exaltation in Celestial glory."²⁰ Smith's nephew and later church president Joseph F. Smith added:

Some people have supposed, that the doctrine of plural marriage was a sort of superfluity, or non-essential to the salvation or exaltation of mankind. In other words, some of the Saints have said, and believe, that a man with one wife, sealed to him by the authority of the Priesthood for time and eternity, will receive an exaltation as great and glorious, if he is faithful, as he possibly could with more than one. I want here to enter my solemn protest against this idea, for I know it is false. There is no blessing promised except upon conditions, and no blessing can be obtained by mankind except by faithful compliance with the conditions, or law, upon which the same is promised. The marriage of one woman to a man for time and eternity by the sealing power, according to the law of God, is a fulfillment of the celestial law of marriage in part—and is good so far as it goes—and so far as a man abides these conditions of the law, he will receive his reward therefor, and this reward, or blessing, he could not obtain on any other grounds or conditions. But this is only the beginning of the law, not the whole of it. Therefore, whoever has imagined that he could obtain the fullness of the blessings pertaining to this celestial law, by complying with only a portion of its conditions, has deceived himself. He cannot do it. . . . [I]t is useless to tell me that there is no blessing attached to obedience to the law, or that a man with only one wife can obtain as great a reward, glory or kingdom as he can with more than one, being equally faithful. . . .

I understand the law of celestial [i.e., plural] marriage to mean that every man in this Church, who has the ability to obey and practice it in righteousness and will not, shall be damned, I say I understand it to mean this and nothing less, and I testify in the name of Jesus that it does mean that.²¹

In actual practice, however, not all eternal marriages were plural and not all sealed spouses were polygamists.²²

19. Cooper, *Promises Made to the Fathers*, 124.

20. William Clayton, Affidavit, 16 February 1874, original in LDS Archives.

21. Joseph F. Smith, 7 July 1878, in *Journal of Discourses*, 20:28, 29-30, 31. In 1890 the church determined that plural marriage was not a requirement for exaltation. For an informative introduction to Mormon plural marriage, see Richard S. Van Wagoner, *Mormon Polygamy: A History* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1986; 2nd ed., 1989). See also Lawrence Foster, *Religion and Sexuality: The Shakers, the Mormons, and the Oneida Community* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1981); and Louis J. Kern, *An Ordered Love: Sex Roles and Sexuality in Victorian Utopias—The Shakers, the Mormons, & the Oneida Community* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1981).

Hoping to avoid the lax record keeping that had attended the first baptisms for the dead, as well as (more importantly) the attention of unbelievers, Smith required that all eternal marriages, whether monogamous or plural, for the living or the dead, be performed with his permission by specially designated priesthood holders. "All these ceremonies," Cooper explained, "were performed in secret, and the rank and file membership of the Church was not aware that such ordinances were being performed."²³ Joseph Bates Noble, brother-in-law of Louisa Beaman, solemnized Smith's and Beaman's plural marriage in early April 1841 "according to the order of Celestial Marriage revealed to the Said Joseph Smith."²⁴ Bates later revealed that

in the fall of the year A.D. 1840 Joseph [S]mith, taught him the principle of Celestial marriage or a "plurality of wives", and that the said Joseph Smith declared that he had received a Revelation from God on the subject, and that the Angel of the Lord had commanded him, Joseph Smith, to move forward in the said order of marriage, and further, that the said Joseph Smith, requested him (Jos. Bates Noble) to step forward and assist him in carrying out the said principle, saying "in revealing this to you I have placed my life in your hands, therefore do not in an evil hour betray me to my enemies."²⁵

This earliest plural marriage—for which Smith provided the words²⁶—joined Beaman to Smith "[f]or time and eternity."²⁷ In fact, if the ceremony Smith dictated the next year in marrying Sarah Ann Whitney reflected his vows to Beaman, the couple "mut[u]ally agree[d]. . . to be each other's companion so long as you both shall live, preserving yourselves for each other and from all others[,] and also throughout

22. "For the common Mormons, eternal [not plural] marriage was the most captivating feature of their domestic theology" (Guy M. Bishop, "Eternal Marriage in Early Mormon Marital Beliefs," *The Historian* 52 [Autumn 1990]: 88).

23. Rex Eugene Cooper, "The Promises Made to the Fathers: A Diachronic Analysis of Mormon Covenant Organization with Reference to Puritan Federal Theology," Ph.D. diss., University of Chicago, June 1985, 229.

24. Joseph Bates Noble, Affidavit, 26 June 1869, in "40 Affidavits on Celestial Marriage," Joseph F. Smith Affidavit Books, LDS Archives.

25. Joseph Bates Noble, Affidavit, 26 June 1869, in "40 Affidavits on Celestial Marriage," Joseph F. Smith Affidavit Books. This affidavit is different from the one cited in the previous note.

26. "The Prophet gave the form of the ceremony, Elder Noble repeating the words after him" (Noble, qtd. in "An Interesting Occasion. Something Relating to Celestial Marriage," *Deseret News*, 11 June 1883, in *Journal History*, 11 June 1883). See also A. Karl Larson and Katharine Miles Larson, eds., *Diary of Charles Lowell Walker*, 2 vols. (Logan: Utah State University Press, 1980), 2:593, 610.

27. Joseph Bates Noble, Testimony, in "Respondent's Testimony, Temple Lot Case," p. 425, q. 643, Archives, Community of Christ, Independence, Missouri.

eternity, reserving only those rights which have been given to my servant Joseph by revelation and commandment and by legal authority in times passed."²⁸

William Clayton's experience corroborates the fact that most early eternal sealings were plural. Less than a month after his own first plural marriage, Clayton recorded Smith saying:

nothing but the unpardonable sin can prevent him (me) [i.e., Clayton] from inheriting eternal glory for he is sealed up by the power of the priesthood unto eternal life having taken the step [i.e., plural marriage] which is necessary for that purpose." He [i.e., Smith] said that except a man and his wife enter into an everlasting covenant and be married for eternity while in this probation by the power and authority of the Holy priesthood they will cease to increase when they die (i.e., they will not have any children in the resurrection[]), but those who are married by the power & authority of the priesthood in this life & continue without committing the sin against the Holy Ghost will continue to increase & have children in the celestial glory. (Compare D&C 131:1-4)

Clayton then wrote: "I feel desirous to be united in an everlasting covenant to my wife [i.e., his first wife, Ruth Moon] and pray that it may soon be."²⁹ His prayer was granted three months later when "Prest. Joseph. . . pronounced a sealing blessing upon Ruth and me. And we mutually entered into an everlasting covenant with each other."³⁰ (At that point, the Claytons' eternal sealing was the church's eighth between civilly married spouses; monogamists Howard and Martha Coray's sealing, performed the same day but by Smith's brother Hyrum, was the ninth.) Of the thirty men who married plurally before Smith's death, only four were sealed first to their civil wives before marrying their plural wives.³¹

Although married since early 1827, Joseph and Emma (Hale) Smith were not the first—or even the second—civilly wed couple to be sealed for eternity. Emma resisted her husband's controversial teachings on celestial marriage, and until she could be convinced, he turned to more

28. "A Revelation to N[ewell]. K. Whitney," *The Essential Joseph Smith* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1995), 165-66; see also H. Michael Marquardt, *The Joseph Smith Revelations: Text and Commentary* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1999), 315-16. The qualification "reserving only those rights which have been given to my servant Joseph by revelation and commandment" referred to future plural marriages.

29. Qtd. in Smith, *Intimate Chronicle*, 102.

30. *Ibid.*, 111.

31. The exceptions are James Adams, Ezra T. Benson, Heber C. Kimball, and Hyrum Smith.

TABLE 1
The Earliest Plural and Eternal Marriages^A

| Husband | Date of First Plural Marriage | Date of Eternal Marriage/ Sealing to Civil Spouse |
|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|---|
| George J. Adams | spring-summer 1843 | N.A. |
| James Adams | 11 July 1843 | 28 May 1843 |
| Ezra T. Benson | 27 April 1844 | 19 November 1843 |
| Reynolds Cahoon | fall-winter 1841-42 | <i>12 November 1843</i> |
| William Clayton | 27 April 1843 | 22 July 1843 |
| Howard Egan | fall-winter 1843-44 | N.A. |
| William Felshaw | 28 July 1843 | N.A. |
| William D. Huntington | 5 February 1843 | N.A. |
| Orson Hyde | February-March 1843 | N.A. |
| Joseph A. Kelting | early 1844 | N.A. |
| Heber C. Kimball | fall-winter 1841-42 | fall-winter 1841-42 |
| Vinson Knight | spring-summer 1842 | N.A. |
| Isaac Morley | 14 January 1844 | <i>26 February 1844</i> |
| Joseph Bates Noble | 5 April 1843 | N.A. |
| John E. Page | before 27 June 1844 | N.A. |
| Parley P. Pratt | 24 July 1843 | 24 July 1843 |
| Willard Richards | 18 January 1843 | 29 May 1843 |
| Ebenezer C. Richardson | November 1843 | N.A. |
| William Henry Harrison Sagers | fall 1843 | N.A. |
| Hyrum Smith | 11 August 1843 | 29 May 1843 |
| John Smith | 13 August 1843 | <i>26 February 1844</i> |
| Joseph Smith | 5 April 1841 | 28 May 1843 |
| William Smith | fall 1843 | N.A. |
| Erastus Snow | 2 April 1844 | N.A. |
| John Taylor | 12 December 1843 | <i>30 January 1844</i> |
| Theodore Turley | 6 March 1844 | N.A. |
| Lyman Wight | May 1844 | N.A. |
| Edwin D. Woolley | by 28 December 1843 | N.A. |
| Brigham Young | 15 June 1842 | 29 May 1843 |
| Lorenzo Dow Young | 9 March 1843 | N.A. |

^AThis table is based, in part, on the research of George D. Smith.

Note: Dates on which civilly married couples, not otherwise sealed for eternity, received the second anointing appear in italics.

sympathetic followers. Sometime after his return to Nauvoo from England in mid-1841, Apostle Heber C. Kimball learned firsthand of Smith's revelation. According to son-in-law James Lawson, Kimball reported:

"[T]he Prophet Joseph [Smith] came to me one evening and said, 'Brother Heber, I want you to give Vilate [(Murray) Kimball, his civil wife] to me to be my wife,' saying that the Lord desired this at my hands." Heber said that in all his life before he had never had anything take hold of him like that. He

was dumb-founded. He went home, and did not eat a mouthful of anything, nor even touch a drop of water to his lips, nor sleep, for three days and nights. He was almost continually offering up his prayers to God and asking Him for comfort. On the evening of the third day he said, "Vilate, let's go down to the Prophet's," and they went down and met him in a private room. Heber said, "Brother Joseph, here is Vilate." "The Prophet wept like a child," said Heber, "and after he had cleared the tears away, he took us and sealed us for time and all eternity, and said, 'Brother Heber, take her, and the Lord will give you a hundredfold.'"³²

Vilate must have been unaware of her husband's dilemma, since Smith also asked Kimball to take a plural wife without informing Vilate, which would have been unnecessary if Vilate knew of Smith's doctrine.³³ Although published more than forty years after the fact, Lawson's account seems accurate and, considering Smith's plural marriage to Beaman the previous April, no doubt documents the first eternal sealing between a civilly married couple. While it is unclear precisely when this sealing occurred, it either preceded or coincided with Kimball's own first plural marriage in early 1842.³⁴

Given Smith's emphasis on the primacy of plural marriage, it should be expected that the first eternal proxy sealings also involved polygamy. While the first such documented ceremony united Joseph C. and Caroline (Whitney) Kingsbury (d. 1842), daughter of Newel K. and Elizabeth Ann Whitney, in early 1843, there is strong circumstantial evidence that proxy sealings actually began the previous year. After Smith married Delcena (Johnson) Sherman, widow of Lyman R. Sherman (d. 1839),

32. James Lawson, qtd. in Orson F. Whitney, *Life of Heber C. Kimball*, 2nd ed. (Salt Lake City: Stevens and Wallace, 1945; 1st ed. 1888), 440. Kimball's exchange with Lawson occurred when the latter was courting Kimball's adopted daughter, Elizabeth Ann Noon Kimball, whom he married in 1856. Elizabeth was the daughter of Kimball's first plural wife, Sarah (Peak) Noon, by her first husband, William Spencer Noon.

33. See Stanley B. Kimball, *Heber C. Kimball: Mormon Patriarch and Pioneer* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1981), 94-96.

34. Kimball agreed to Smith's demand that he marry plurally without telling Vilate. Vilate sensed that her husband was troubled, and when Kimball explained his predicament, the couple concluded that he should marry two elderly sisters who, they felt, "would cause her [Vilate] little, if any, unhappiness" (Whitney, 336). According to Lorenzo Snow, another early apostle and later church president, when Smith learned of Kimball's plan, he announced that the "arrangement is of the devil you go and get you a young wife one you can take to your bosom and love and raise children by" (qtd. in Stan Larson, ed., *Prisoner for Polygamy: The Memoirs and Letters of Rudgeer Clawson at the Utah Territorial Penitentiary, 1884-87* [Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1993], 12). Smith then "commanded" Kimball to marry thirty-one-year-old Sarah (Peak) Noon, whose husband had recently deserted her. In fact, Kimball's biographer explained, "Heber was told by Joseph that if he did not do this he would lose his Apostleship and be damned" (Whitney, 336n). The sources disagree as to whether or not Vilate helped choose the two elderly sisters, or if Kimball acted alone.

sometime before July 1842,³⁵ Delcena's younger brother reported that she "had already been sealed to him [i.e., Sherman] by proxy."³⁶ If her sibling's memory is correct, Johnson-Sherman's proxy sealing probably occurred around the same time as her plural marriage to Smith.³⁷ Two other early widows whom Smith married, and who may have been sealed at the same time to their deceased husbands, are Agnes (Moulton) Coolbrith Smith (m. Don Carlos Smith) and Martha (McBride) Knight (m. Vinson Knight). Joseph Smith married Coolbrith-Smith in January 1842³⁸ and McBride-Knight sometime in August 1842.³⁹

The second eternal sealing for a civilly married couple also occurred within the context of plural marriage. As briefly noted, Smith married Sarah Ann Whitney in mid-1842, with the permission of her parents, Newel K. and Elizabeth Ann Whitney. Less than three weeks later, in a letter to the Whitneys, Smith hinted at the blessings awaiting his new in-laws: "[O]ne thing I want to see you for it is to git the fulness of my blessings sealed upon our heads, &c."⁴⁰ Historian Lyndon Cook notes that Smith used "acceptance of plural marriage as a test for eternal marriage sealings," and the following Sunday, 21 August, the prophet rewarded the Whitneys' loyalty by sealing them for eternity.⁴¹ As Whitney recorded:

Part in the first reserrection [resurrection] together with other blessings now added sunday 27st [sic, 21st] day of augt [August] [18]42 myself and wife I now also bless[ed] with part in the first reserrection [resurrection] also with many other blessings together with the promise of all my house the same day & of the same time[.]⁴²

35. Todd Compton, *In Sacred Loneliness: The Plural Wives of Joseph Smith* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1997), 4, 288-305.

36. Benjamin F. Johnson, *My Life's Review: Autobiography of Benjamin Franklin Johnson* (Provo, Utah: Grandin Book Co., 1997; 1st ed., 1947), 85.

37. Following completion of the Nauvoo temple, Sherman was resealed for time and eternity to Lyman Sherman, then sealed for time only to Almon W. Babbitt. See "Book of Proxy [Sealings]," entry no. 79, p. 36, 24 January 1846, photocopy in my possession, original in LDS Archives.

38. Following completion of the Nauvoo temple, Coolbrith-Smith was sealed for time and eternity to Don Carlos Smith, then sealed for time only to George A. Smith. See *ibid.*, entry no. 109, p. 49, 28 January 1846.

39. Following completion of the Nauvoo temple, McBride-Knight was resealed to Smith for time and eternity, then sealed for time only to Heber C. Kimball. See *ibid.*, entry no. 92, p. 42, 26 January 1846.

40. "Dear, and Beloved, Brother and Sister, Whitney, and &c.," in *Essential Joseph Smith*, 167.

41. Lyndon W. Cook, *Joseph C. Kingsbury: A Biography* (Provo, Utah: Grandin Book Co., 1985), 75.

42. Marquardt, 316.

Reflecting their change in status, Elizabeth Ann referred to the couple's next child born after their sealing as "the first child born heir to the Holy Priesthood and in the New and Everlasting Covenant in this dispensation."⁴³ Unlike Kimball, however, Whitney would wait to take his own first plural wife until after Smith's death in 1844. "[A]lthough my husband believed and was firm in teaching this Celestial order of Marriage," Elizabeth Ann recalled, "he was slow in practice."⁴⁴

The Whitneys also participated, albeit indirectly, in the best documented of the church's early proxy sealings: that of Joseph C. and Caroline (Whitney) Kingsbury. According to Kingsbury, Smith sealed him to the Whitneys' deceased daughter after he agreed to marry civilly Smith's recent plural wife (and Kingsbury's sister-in-law), Sarah Ann Whitney. (Kingsbury's decision to act as the public husband of Smith's first teenage wife—Sarah Ann was seventeen—would have deflected unwanted scrutiny in the event of a pregnancy.)⁴⁵ In uniting the Kingsburys in March 1843, Smith pronounced:

I Seal thee [Joseph Kingsbury] up to Come forth in the first resurrection unto eternal life—And thy Companion Caroline who is now dead thou shalt have in the first Resurrection for I seal thee up for and in her behalf to come forth in the first Resurrection unto eternal lives (and it shall be as though She was present herself) and thou Shalt have her and She Shall be thine & no one Shall have power to take her from thee, And you both Shall be crowned and enthroned to dwell together in a Kingdom in the Celestial Glory in the presents of God And you Shall enjoy each other[']s Society & embraces in all the fulness of the Gospel of Jesus Christ worlds without End And I Seal these blessings upon thee and thy Companion in the name of Jesus Christ for thou shalt receive the holy anointing & Endowment in this Life to prepare you for all these blessings even So Amen.

Smith sought as well at this time to reassure the couple by blessing Sarah Ann:

Oh Lord my God, thou that dwellest on high bless I beseech of thee the one into whose hands this may fall and crown her with a diadem of glory in the Eternal worlds. Oh let it be sealed this day on high that she shall come forth in the first reserrection to recieve the same and verily it shall be so saith the Lord if she remain in the Everlasting covenant to the end as also all her Fathers house shall be saved in the same Eternal glory and if any of them shall wander

43. See her "Reminiscences," in Carol Cornwall Madsen, ed., *In Their Own Words: Women and the Story of Nauvoo* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1994), 204.

44. *Ibid.*, 202.

45. Of the twelve women whom Smith had married in Nauvoo by the time of his sealing to Sarah Ann, eight [67 percent] had civil husbands who would have also shielded Smith from censure in case of a birth. Four of these women were under the age of thirty.

from the foald of the Lord they shall not perish but shall return saith the Lord and be saived ~~in~~ and by repentance be crowned with all the fullness of the glory of the Everlasting Gospel. These promises I seal upon all of their heads in the name of Jesus Christ by the Law of the Holy Priesthood even so Amen.⁴⁶

Four weeks later, Kingsbury stood by "Sarah Ann Whitney as supposed to be her husband & had a pretended marriage for the purpose of Bringing about the purposes of God in these last days."⁴⁷ Smith performed the civil ceremony.⁴⁸

Before the end of the next month, Emma Smith and her husband's older brother, Hyrum (who also served as presiding patriarch), finally, according to Clayton, "received the doctrine of priesthood" (that is, plural marriage).⁴⁹ Hyrum's conversion was total;⁵⁰ Emma, though she had participated in the May 1843 resealings of sisters Emily and Eliza Partridge to her husband,⁵¹ was less enthusiastic. As a reward for Emma's cooperation, she and Smith were eternally sealed on 28 May 1843, the church's third such union.⁵² Also sealed were Mormon stalwarts James and Harriet Denton Adams (m. 1809).⁵³ Both couples were sealed during a meeting of Smith's Quorum of the Anointed, scene of the earliest endowment ceremonies.⁵⁴ Emma and Harriet, the first women to witness the quorum's activities, would be initiated as full members later

46. "Blessing Given to Sarah Ann Whitney by Joseph Smith. Nauvoo City, March 23, 1843," typescript copy, LDS Archives.

47. After Smith's death, Joseph C. and Caroline's sealing was repeated on 4 March 1845 by Heber C. Kimball, with Dorcas Adelia Moore standing in for Caroline. Immediately afterwards, Kimball sealed Kingsbury and Moore as husband and wife "for time & eternity." See Joseph C. Kingsbury, "History of Joseph C. Kingsbury," under entries dated 29 April 1843 and January 1845, Special Collections, Marriott Library, University of Utah, Salt Lake City. See also Compton, 342-63; and Cook, *Joseph C. Kingsbury*, 75-77.

48. Cook, *Nauvoo Deaths and Marriages*, 104.

49. Smith, *Intimate Chronicle*, 106.

50. Smith was preparing his brother to succeed him and relied on him to perform the majority of eternal sealings from this point on.

51. Smith had married the Partridge sisters without Emma's knowledge the previous March. When she subsequently agreed to allow her husband to take additional wives of her choosing, she selected the Partridges. Smith then repeated the ceremony for Emma's benefit. See Compton, 407-409.

52. See Scott H. Faulring, ed., *An American Prophet's Record: The Diaries and Journals of Joseph Smith* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books in association with Smith Research Associates, 1989), 381.

53. *Ibid.*, 381. Adams entered plural marriage five weeks later on 11 July. See George D. Smith, "Nauvoo Roots of Mormon Polygamy, 1841-46: A Preliminary Demographic Report," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 27 (Spring 1994): 37.

54. For introductions to the anointed quorum, see D. Michael Quinn, "Latter-day Saint Prayer Circles," *BYU Studies* 19 (Fall 1978): 82-100; Andrew F. Ehat, "Joseph Smith's

that fall. Quorum members accepted Smith's doctrine of plural marriage in theory, if not yet in fact.⁵⁵ By the time of his sealing to Emma, Smith had married some twenty-five celestial wives,⁵⁶ and the following brethren had, with Smith's permission, taken at least one plural wife: Reynolds Cahoon, William Clayton, William Huntington, Orson Hyde, Heber C. Kimball, Vinson Knight, Joseph Bates Noble, Willard Richards, Brigham Young, and Lorenzo Dow Young.⁵⁷

The next day after the Smith/Adams sealings, Smith officiated, again during a meeting of the anointed quorum, at the sealings of three civilly married couples (the church's fifth, sixth, and seventh): Hyrum and Mary (Fielding) Smith (m. 1837), Brigham and Mary Ann (Angell) Young (m. 1834), and Willard and Jennetta (Richards) Richards (m. 1838).⁵⁸ He also performed on this occasion three proxy sealings: that of Hyrum and Jerusha (Barden) Smith (d. 1837), Brigham and Miriam (Works) Young (d. 1832), and Mercy R. (Fielding) and Robert B. Thompson (d. 1841).⁵⁹ For these latter sealings, Mary Smith stood in the place of Jerusha Smith, Mary Ann Young in place of Miriam Young, and Hyrum Smith in place of Robert Thompson. "Such a wedding I am quite sure [was] never witnessed before in this generation," remembered Mercy Thompson. "[P]erhaps some may think I could envy Queen Victoria in some of her glory. Not while my name stands first on the list in this Dispensation of women seal[e]d to a Dead Husband through devine Revelation."⁶⁰ Within weeks, Hyrum took his widowed sister-in-law, Mercy, as his first plural wife.⁶¹

Introduction of Temple Ordinances and the 1844 Mormon Succession Question," master's thesis, Brigham Young University, 1982; and David John Buerger, *Mysteries of Godliness: A History of Mormon Temple Worship* (San Francisco: Smith Research Associates, 1994), 35-68. For the quorum's activities, see D. Michael Quinn, *The Mormon Hierarchy: Origins of Power* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books in association with Smith Research Associates, 1994), 491-519.

55. "[T]hese ordinances [i.e., sealings and the fullness of the priesthood]," writes Andrew F. Ehat, "were being administered to those who were at least willing to believe in the divinity of plural marriage. . . . Joseph Smith believed that God told him to employ this principle as a means of testing the faith of those selected to receive these temple blessings" (74-75, endnotes omitted).

56. See Compton, 4-7. "It need scarcely be said," remarked Joseph F. Smith, "that the Prophet [Joseph Smith] found no one any more willing to lead out in this matter in righteousness than he was himself. Many could see it—nearly all to whom he revealed it believed it, and received the witness of the Holy Spirit that it was of God; but none excelled, or even matched the courage of the Prophet himself" (Discourse, *Journal of Discourses*, 20:29).

57. See the data in Smith, "Nauvoo Roots of Mormon Polygamy," 37-72.

58. See Faulring, *American Prophet's Record*, 381.

59. *Ibid.*

60. "Reminiscence of Mercy Rachel Fielding Thompson," in Madsen, 195.

61. Thompson's sealing to Smith was for time only: "He [i.e., Hyrum Smith] made an agreement that he would deliver me up on the morning of the day of resurrection to my husband Robert Blashel Thompson, but would take charge of me for life" (Mercy Rachel Thompson, Testimony, p. 247, q. 174, in "Respondent's Testimony, Temple Lot Case").

TABLE 2

The Earliest Eternal Marriage Sealings for Living Civilly Married Couples

| Civilly Married Couple | Date of Eternal Sealing | Officiator | Date of First Plural Marriage Before 27 June 1844 |
|---|----------------------------|--------------------|--|
| Heber C. and Vilate (Murray) Kimball* | fall-winter 1841-42 | Joseph Smith | fall-winter 1841-42 |
| Newel K. and Elizabeth Ann (Smith) Whitney* | 21 August 1842 | Joseph Smith | N.A. (monogamist) |
| Joseph and Emma (Hale) Smith* | 28 May 1843 | Hyrum Smith | 5 April 1841 |
| James and Harriet (Denton) Adams* | 28 May 1843 | Joseph/Hyrum Smith | 11 July 1843 |
| Willard and Jennetta (Richards) Richards* | 29 May 1843 | Joseph/Hyrum Smith | 18 January 1843 |
| Hyrum and Mary (Fielding) Smith* | 29 May 1843 | Joseph Smith | 11 August 1843 |
| Brigham and Mary Ann (Angell) Young* | 29 May 1843 | Hyrum Smith | 15 June 1842 |
| William and Ruth (Moon) Clayton* | 22 July 1843 | Joseph Smith | 27 April 1843 |
| Howard and Martha Jane (Knowlton) Coray | 22 July 1843 | Hyrum Smith | N.A. (monogamist) |
| Parley P. and Mary Ann (Frost) Pratt* | 24 July 1843 | Hyrum Smith | 24 July 1843 |
| Thomas and Caroline (Nickerson [Hubbard]) Grover | 12-31 August 1843 | Hyrum Smith | N.A. (monogamist) |
| John and Julia (Ives) Pack | 12-31 August 1843 | Hyrum Smith | N.A. (monogamist) |
| Comelius P. and Permelia (Darrow) Lott* | 20 September 1843 | Hyrum Smith | N.A. (monogamist) |
| David and Rhoda Ann (Marvin) Fullmer | Fall 1843 | Hyrum Smith | N.A. (monogamist) |
| Benjamin F. and Melissa (LeBaron) Johnson | 20 October 1843 | Joseph Smith | N.A. (monogamist) |
| William and Rosannah (Robinson) Marks* | 22 October 1843 | N.A. | N.A. (monogamist) |
| Wilford and Phoebe (Carter) Woodruff* | 11 November 1843 | Hyrum Smith | N.A. (monogamist) |
| Reynolds and Thirza (Stiles) Cahoon* | 12 November 1843 | N.A. | fall-winter 1841-42 |
| Alpheus and Lois (Lathrop) Cutler* | 15 November 1843 | N.A. | N.A. (monogamist) |
| Ezra T. and Pamela (Andrus) Benson | 19 November 1843 | Hyrum Smith | 27 April 1844 |
| George A. and Bathsheba (Bigler) Smith* | 20 January 1844 | Brigham Young | N.A. (monogamist) |
| John and Leonora (Cannon) Taylor* | 30 January 1844 | N.A. | 12 December 1843 |
| W. W. and Sally (Waterman) Phelps* | 2 February 1844 | N.A. | N.A. (monogamist) |
| Isaac and Lucy (Gunn) Morley* | 26 February 1844 | N.A. | 14 January 1844 |
| John and Clarissa (Lyman) Smith* | 26 February 1844 | N.A. | 13 August 1843 |

*Members of Joseph Smith's Quorum of the Anointed, initiated during Joseph's lifetime.

Note: Dates on which civilly married couples, not otherwise sealed for eternity, received the second anointing appear in italics.

The next sealings combined celestial, eternal, and proxy marriages. According to LDS historian Andrew F. Ehat, Parley P. and Mary Ann (Frost) Pratt (m. 1837) were sealed for eternity by Hyrum Smith on 23 June 1843, but when Joseph Smith learned of the ceremony performed in his absence and without his permission, he rescinded it.⁶² Reportedly, Pratt had been courting Elizabeth Brotherton to become his first celestial wife, whereas Smith had wanted Pratt's first plural wife to be Mary Ann's sister, Olive Grey Frost. One month later, on 24 July, Joseph asked Hyrum⁶³ to seal Pratt and his first civilly married wife, Thankful (Halsey) Pratt (m. 1827, d. 1837), for eternity, with Frost acting as proxy; then seal Pratt and Frost for time and eternity; and finally seal Brotherton to Pratt as his first plural wife.⁶⁴ Joseph Smith subsequently wed Olive Frost, probably at around this same time.⁶⁵

Shortly after Hyrum Smith read his brother's revelation on celestial marriage (D&C 132) to members of the Nauvoo Stake High Council in mid-August 1843, councilor Thomas Grover asked to be married eternally both to his deceased wife and to his current wife. Hyrum had told the stake leaders, "Now, you that believe this revelation and go forth and obey the same shall be saved, and you that reject it shall be damned."⁶⁶ Joseph consented and asked Hyrum to perform the ceremony during which Caroline Eliza (Nickerson) Hubbard Grover (widow of Marshal Hubbard) stood as proxy for Caroline (Whiting) Grover (m. 1828, d. 1840), and then was herself sealed for time and eternity to her husband, Thomas Grover, whom she had married civilly in 1841.⁶⁷ Like Newel Whitney, Grover did not contract his first plural marriage until after Smith's death.⁶⁸ Before the end of the decade, however, Grover and Nickerson would divorce.

62. See Ehat, 66-71 (Ehat acknowledges the assistance of Pratt family historian Stephen L. Pratt). "[T]he sealing power was not in Hyrum legitimately," reported Brigham Young, "neither did he act on the sealing principle only as he was dictated by Joseph. This was proven, for Hyrum did undertake to seal without counsel, & Joseph told him if he did not stop it he would go to hell and all those he sealed with him" (Young to William Smith, 10 August 1845, Brigham Young Papers, LDS Archives).

63. Mary Ann Frost Pratt, Affidavit, 3 September 1869, in untitled book of affidavits, Joseph F. Smith Affidavit Books. (Pratt makes clear that Hyrum, not Joseph, officiated.)

64. Mary Ann Frost Pratt, Affidavit, 3 September 1869, in untitled book of affidavits, Joseph F. Smith Affidavit Books. This affidavit is different from the previously cited affidavit.

65. Compton, 6, 586-92.

66. Qtd. in Thomas Grover to A. M. Musser, 10 January 1885 [1886], in "Elder Grover's Testimony," *Deseret Evening News*, 11 January 1886, 2.

67. Thomas Grover, Affidavit, 6 July 1869, in "40 Affidavits on Celestial Marriage," Joseph F. Smith Affidavits Books.

68. "At that time," Grover later wrote, "I was in the deepest trouble that I had ever been in, in my life. I went before the Lord in prayer and prayed that I might die as I did not

Also in August 1843, Hyrum Smith broached the topic of eternal (and presumably plural) marriage with John Pack, his wife, Julia (Ives) (m. 1832), and his mother, Phylotte (Green) Pack. Smith explained that “all former covenants and contracts in marriage would be null and void after death.” He continued that it was Pack’s “privilege to have his wife sealed to him for time and for all eternity, and further that he had a right to act for his father, George Pack who was dead, that his father and mother might be sealed or married for time and all eternity, also.” According to Pack, Smith “then and there Sealed to him his wife. . .for time and for all eternity, and also Sealed or married his mother. . .to his father. . ., he (John Pack) acting for and in behalf of his father who was dead.”⁶⁹ Nineteen months later, again after Joseph and Hyrum Smith’s deaths, Pack took his first plural wife.

Over the next three months, civilly married spouses Cornelius and Permelia (Darrow) Lott (m. 1823), David and Rhoda Ann (Marvin) Fullmer (m. 1831), and Benjamin F. and Melissa (Lebaron) Johnson (m. 1841) were all sealed for time and eternity—the first two couples by Hyrum Smith, the third by Joseph Smith; all three remained monogamists during Joseph’s lifetime.⁷⁰ The Lotts were united “for time and Eternaty” on the same day their daughter Melissa wed Smith as his thirty-first plural wife.⁷¹

Johnson recalled of his sealing at age twenty-five: “In the evening, he [Joseph Smith] called me and my wife to come and sit down, for he wished to marry us according to the Law of the Lord. I thought it a joke, and said I should not marry my wife again, unless she courted *me*, for I did it all the first time. He chided my levity, told me he was in earnest, and so it proved; for we stood up and were sealed by the Holy Spirit of Promise.”⁷² Of the Johnsons’ sealing, Clayton recorded:

Evening Joseph [Smith] gave us much instruction, showing the advantages of the E[verlasting] C[ovenant] [i.e., eternal marriage]. He said there was

wish to disobey his order to me. On a sudden there stood before me my oldest wife that I have now and the voice of the Lord said that ‘this is your companion for time and all eternity.’ At this time I never had seen her and did not know that there was such a person on this earth” (Grover to Brigham Young, 14 October 1870, Brigham Young Papers).

69. John Pack, Affidavit, 22 July 1869, in “40 Affidavits on Celestial Marriage,” Joseph F. Smith Affidavits Books.

70. See the Lott family Bible, LDS Archives; “A Brief Sketch of the Life of Rhoda Ann Marvin Fullmer, Wife of David Fullmer, as Given by Her Own Mouth This 29th Day of Nov. 1885,” in Fullmer Family Notebook, LDS Archives; and Benjamin F. Johnson, Affidavit, 4 March 1870, in untitled book of affidavits, Joseph F. Smith Affidavit Books.

71. “Family Record,” in Lott family Bible; see Compton, 598.

72. Johnson, *My Life’s Review*, 85-86, emphasis in original.

two seals in the Priesthood. The first was that which was placed upon a man and woman when they made the covenant and the other was the seal which allotted to them their particular mansion.⁷³ After his discourse B[enjamin]. F. Johnson & his wife were united in an everlasting covenant.⁷⁴

The next two proxy marriages are conjectural. On 2 November 1843, Joseph Smith married Fanny (Young) Carr Murray. Young was both the older sister of Brigham Young and widow of Roswell Murray (m. 1832, d. 1839).⁷⁵ If their marriage mirrored Smith's plural marriages to other widows, he may have married Young for time (with Brigham Young officiating), then sealed her to her late husband (with Brigham Young acting as proxy). One account of the ceremony refers simply to "the marrying or Sealing of Fanny Murray to President Joseph Smith";⁷⁶ however, another says that the marriage to Smith was "for time and eternity."⁷⁷ In the second case, Lucy Mack Smith, mother of Joseph Smith and widow of Joseph Smith Sr. (m. 1796, d. 1840), entered the Quorum of the Anointed in early October 1843.⁷⁸ One month later, she received that quorum's highest ordinance, the second anointing. Since this ritual was in principle administered only to married couples, Lucy and Joseph Smith, Sr., may have been sealed at or by this time.⁷⁹

That November, Hyrum Smith officiated at the proxy sealing of Jacob and Elizabeth (Holden) Peart (m. 1824, d. 1841). Peart's civil wife, Phebe (Robson) (m. 1842), acted as proxy for Holden, after which Peart and Robson were sealed for time only. (Peart and Robson's reaffirmation of their civil marriage may mark the first such sealing "for time only" in the church for previously married spouses.) Hyrum Smith's wife Mary Fielding was present as a witness.⁸⁰

The last known proxy sealing prior to Smith's death on 27 June 1844 involved the parents of two of his plural wives. Margaret and Edward

73. This second seal refers to the second anointing, discussed below.

74. Qtd. in Smith, *Intimate Chronicle*, 122-23.

75. Young had previously married and divorced Robert Carr.

76. Augusta A. Young, Affidavit, 12 July 1869, in "40 Affidavits on Celestial Marriage," Joseph F. Smith Affidavit Books.

77. Harriet Cook Young, Affidavit, 4 March 1870, in untitled book of affidavits, Joseph F. Smith Affidavit Books.

78. Faulring, *American Prophet's Record*, 418.

79. See Quinn, *Mormon Hierarchy: Origins of Power*, 497. Smith, Sr., would also have been initiated by proxy into the anointed quorum, although there are no known examples of this having occurred. At the same time, there are instances of the anointed quorum's highest ordinance being administered to men without their wives. Still, it seems barely conceivable that Smith, Jr., would not have somehow sealed his parents for eternity.

80. Jacob Peart Sr., Affidavit, 23 April 1870, in untitled book of affidavits, Joseph F. Smith Affidavit Books.

TABLE 3
The Earliest Proxy Marriage Sealings

| Living Spouse | Deceased Spouse | Proxy | Date of Eternal Sealing | Officiator |
|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------|-------------------------|----------------------------|------------------|
| Agnes Moulton Coolbrith Smith* | Don Carlos Smith | Joseph Smith | 6 January 1842 | Brigham Young |
| Delcena Johnson Sherman | Lyman R. Sherman | Joseph Smith | before July 1842 | Brigham Young? |
| Martha McBride Knight* | Vinson Knight | Joseph Smith | August 1842 | Heber C. Kimball |
| Joseph C. Kingsbury | Caroline Whitney Kingsbury | Sarah Ann Whitney | 23 March 1843 | Joseph Smith |
| Hyrum Smith | Jerusha Barden Smith | Mary Fielding Smith | 29 May 1843 | Joseph Smith |
| Brigham Young | Miriam Angeline Works Young | Mary Ann Angel Young | 29 May 1843 | Joseph Smith |
| Mercy Rachel Fielding Thompson | Robert B. Thompson | Hyrum Smith | 29 May 1843 | Joseph Smith |
| Parley P. Pratt | Thankful Halsey Pratt | Mary Ann Frost Pratt | 24 July 1843 | Hyrum Smith |
| Thomas Grover | Caroline Whiting Grover | Caroline Nickerson | 12-31 August 1843 | Hyrum Smith |
| Phylotte Green Pack | George Pack | John Pack | 12-31 August 1843 | Hyrum Smith |
| Fanny Young Murray* | Roswell Murray | Joseph Smith | 2 November 1843 | Brigham Young |
| Lucy Mack Smith* | Joseph Smith Sr. | Hyrum Smith? | 12 November 1843 | Joseph Smith? |
| Jacob Peart Sr. | Elizabeth Holden Peart | Phebe Thompson Peart | November 1843 | Hyrum Smith |
| Margaret Lawrence Butterfield | Edward Lawrence | William Clayton | 21 November 1843 | Hyrum Smith |

*The evidence for these proxy sealings is circumstantial.

Lawrence had married about 1822; two daughters, Maria and Sarah, followed in 1823 and 1826. By June 1841, Edward was dead and Smith had been appointed guardian of the Lawrence estate. That same year, or early the next, Margaret married Josiah Butterfield. The following May 1843, Smith wed both Lawrence sisters.⁸¹ Six months later, William Clayton asked Smith to "come to my house & marry Marg[are]t. Butterfield to her first husband [i.e., Edward Lawrence]." Smith was unable to comply and asked Hyrum to perform the rite. During the ceremony, Clayton "stood as proxy for Edw[ar]d. Lawrence."⁸²

Throughout the fall of 1843 and winter of 1843-44, civilly married couples Wilford and Phoebe (Carter) Woodruff (m. 1837), Ezra T. and Pamela (Andrus) Benson (m. 1832), and George A. and Bathsheba

81. See Compton, 6, 475-77.

82. Qtd. in Smith, *Intimate Chronicle*, 123.

(Bigler) Smith (m. 1841) were sealed for eternity.⁸³ Again, all were monogamists; only Benson married plurally before Smith's death. These were apparently the last civilly wed couples to be joined in a sealing ceremony during Smith's lifetime. Woodruff recorded:

During the evening, I walked over to Br [John] Taylors & spent some time in conversing about the principle of the Celestial world or some of them. Br Hiram Smith was in with us & presented som[e] ideas of much interest to me concerning Baptism for the dead, the resurrection redemption & exhalation in the New & everlastig covenant that reacheth into the eternal world.

He sealed the marri[a]ge covenant between me & my wife Phebe W Carter for time & eternity & gave us the principle of it which was interessting to us. After spending the evening pleasantly we returned home & spent the night.⁸⁴

By late 1843, word of Joseph Smith's teachings on eternal marriage for the living and the dead was spreading. The response was not always welcoming. "[A]fter preaching about everything else he could think of in the world," remembered his cousin, Smith "at last hints at the idea of the law of redemption, makes a bare hint at the law of sealing, and it produced such a tremendous excitement that, as soon as he had got his dinner half eaten, he had to go back to the stand, and unpreach all that he had preached, and let the people to guess at the matter."⁸⁵ Others were more receptive. Sixty-one-year-old Jacob Scott wrote to his non-Mormon daughter:

Several Revelations, of great utility, & uncommon interest; have been lately communicated to Joseph & the Church, . . .one is that *all* Marriage contracts, or Covenants, are to be "*Everlasting*["]. . .to be married for both *Time & Eternity*: and as respects those whose partners were dead, before this *Revelation* was given to the Church; they have the privilege to be married to their deceased husbands, or wives (as the case may be,) for eternity. . . .

Many of the members of the church have already availed themselves of this privilege, & have been married to their deceased partners; & in some cases where a Man has been married to 2 or three wives, and they are dead he has been married to them all; in the order, in which he was married to them

83. Wilford Woodruff, *Wilford Woodruff's Journal*, ed. Scott G. Kenney, 9 vols. (Midvale, UT: Signature Books, 1983-85), 2:326-27; Pamela A. Benson, Affidavit, 6 September 1969, in untitled book of affidavits, Joseph F. Smith Affidavit Books; Bathsheba W. Smith, Affidavit, 19 November 1903, in untitled book of affidavits, Joseph F. Smith Affidavit Books; and Bathsheba W. Smith, Testimony, pp. 298-99, qq. 151-61, in "Respondent's Testimony, Temple Lot Case."

84. Woodruff, *Journal*, 2:326-27.

85. George A. Smith, Discourse, *Journal of Discourses*, 2:217.

while living & also widows have been married to their dead husbands ~~whether one woman, another one may have been~~ but *only to one husband*. . . . There are many things connected with this subject, which I am not liberty to communicate to you. . . other revelations⁸⁶ intimately connected with this momentous dispensation and which are almost ready to unfold themselves to us, I cannot communicate to you at present, altho' I know them in part, for you could not bear them now.⁸⁷

Also in late 1843, Smith began introducing to members of his anointed quorum an ordinance he and others referred to as the second anointing, or fullness of the priesthood.⁸⁸ On 28 September 1843, Joseph and Emma became the first recipients of this "highest and holiest order."⁸⁹ According to Nauvoo historian Glen M. Leonard, Smith's "crowning ordinance" was "a promise of kingly powers and of endless lives. It was the confirmation of promises that worthy men could become kings and priests and that women could become queens and priestesses in the eternal worlds."⁹⁰ Brigham Young explained, "For any person to have the fullness of that priesthood, he must be a king and priest. A person may have a portion of that priesthood, the same as governors or judges of England have power from the king to transact business; but that does not make them kings of England. A person may be anointed king and priest long before he receives his kingdom."⁹¹ Such members, added twentieth-century LDS apostle Bruce R. McConkie, "receive the more sure word of prophecy, which means that the Lord seals their exaltation upon them while they are yet in this life. . . .[T]heir exaltation is assured."⁹² During this ordinance, Cook explains, a husband was "ordained a priest and anointed a king unto God," while wives were "anointed priestesses and queens unto their husband."⁹³ Ehat continues:

These ordinances, depending on the person's ecclesiastical position, made

86. This is an allusion to plural marriage.

87. Jacob Scott to Mary Scott Warnock, 5 January 1844, Archives, Community of Christ. Jacob was the father of Sarah Scott Mulholland, one of the Joseph Smith's "possible" plural wives (see Compton, 8). He died the following January.

88. The first anointing was part of the ceremony of initiation into the anointed quorum.

89. Faulring, *American Prophet's Record*, 416.

90. Leonard, 260-61. For a thorough treatment, see David John Buerger, "The Fullness of the Priesthood": The Second Anointing in Latter-day Saint Theology and Practice," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 16 (Spring 1983): 10-44.

91. Smith, *History of the Church*, 5:527.

92. Bruce R. McConkie, *Mormon Doctrine*, 2nd. ed. (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1966), 109-10.

93. Cook, *Joseph C. Kingsbury*, 94. Husbands and wives did not expect they would act as kings and priests, queens and priestesses in this life.

the recipient a “king and priest,” “in,” “in and over,” or (as only in Joseph Smith’s case) “over” the Church. Moreover, the recipient had sealed upon him the power to bind and loose on earth as Joseph explained in his definition of the fulness of the priesthood. Another blessing, growing out of the promise of the sealing power was the specific blessing that whatever thing was desired it would not be withheld when sought for in diligent prayer.⁹⁴

“There is no exaltation in the kingdom of God,” concluded Church Historian, and later president, Joseph Fielding Smith, “without the fulness of priesthood.”⁹⁵

Such assurances of virtually unconditional exaltation had figured in Smith’s eternal sealings since at least 1841. In mid-1843, the Lord vowed through Smith:

[I]f a man marry a wife by my word, which is my law, and by the new and everlasting covenant, and it is sealed unto them by the Holy Spirit of promise, by him who is anointed, unto whom I have appointed this power and the keys of this priesthood; and it shall be said unto them—. . . Then shall they be gods, because they have no end; therefore shall they be from everlasting to everlasting, because they continue; then shall they be above all, because all things are subject unto them. Then shall they be gods, because they have all power, and the angels are subject unto them. . . and [if] he or she shall commit any sin or transgression of the new and everlasting covenant whatever, and all manner of blasphemies, and if they commit no murder wherein they shed innocent blood, yet they shall come forth in the first resurrection, and enter into their exaltation. (D&C 132:19-20, 26)

The previous year, the Lord had told Newel and Elizabeth Ann Whitney, “[T]he thing that my servant Joseph Smith has made known unto you and your Family shall be rewarded upon your heads with honor and immortality and eternal life to all your house both old & young.”⁹⁶ One of Smith’s brides reported him telling her, “If you will take this step it will insure your eternal salvation & exaltation and that of your father’s household & all of your kindred.”⁹⁷ To these promises of eternal exaltation, the second anointing added the particular blessings of title (king/queen), dominion (in/over the Kingdom of God), and power (to ask and receive).

94. Ehat, 95-96.

95. Qtd. in Bruce R. McConkie, comp., *Doctrines of Salvation: Sermons and Writings of Joseph Fielding Smith* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1956), 3:132.

96. “A Revelation to N[jewel]. K. Whitney,” in *Essential Joseph Smith*, 165.

97. Helen Mar Kimball, qtd. in Richard S. Van Wagoner, *Sidney Rigdon: A Portrait of Religious Excess* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1994), 293.

As wives were anointed to their husbands, the second anointing also functioned for those spouses not otherwise sealed for eternity as a *de facto* eternal sealing. (Plural wives would not receive the second anointing until after Smith's death.) From such rituals, notes Cooper, "sprang. . . family kingdoms, organized around each man who had been anointed a priest and king. Since Joseph Smith, by matrimonial sealings, created bonds between himself and at least some other men, it is possible that he envisioned all the priests and kings within the system eventually being linked to him through some form of sealing network."⁹⁸ Civilly married couples, not previously sealed, joined forever through the second anointing as heirs of the fullness of the priesthood prior to Smith's death included William and Rosannah (Robinson) Marks (m. 1813), Reynolds and Thirza (Stiles) Cahoon (m. 1810), Alpheus and Lois (Lathrop) Cutler (m. 1808), John and Leonora (Cannon) Taylor (m. 1833), William W. and Sally (Waterman) Phelps (m. 1815), Isaac and Lucy (Gunn) Morley (m. 1812), and John and Clarissa (Lyman) Smith (m. 1815). The Cahoons, Taylors, Morleys, and Smiths had all embraced plural marriage; the remainder were monogamists, although Cutler and Phelps would take plural wives after Joseph Smith's death. Only Marks opposed the doctrine. These apparently were the last couples so united during Smith's lifetime.

Following Smith's death, many of the eternal sealings both living and proxy solemnized while he was alive were (like the rites of the anointed quorum) repeated in early 1846 in the Nauvoo temple.⁹⁹ Again, this allowed for greater uniformity in administration and accuracy in recording. During the one-month period from early January to early February 1846, for example, close to 200 proxy sealings were performed,

98. Cooper, *Promises Made to the Fathers*, 148-49. While Smith's doctrine of sealing foresaw adult male-to-male father/son-type relationships, the first known such adoption occurred in late January 1846, eight months after Smith's death. According to Brigham Young: "at 10 in the Morning I with a number of the 12 [Apostles] & others assembled in the *Celestial Room of the* [Nauvoo] Temple where I attended to the Sacred ordinance of Sealing by adoption. . . . [T]he Spirit of the Almighty God attending the administration & filled our hearts to overflowing & many wept for joy that were adopted into my Family" (Young, *Diary*, 25 January 1846, LDS Archives). The record for John M. Bernhisel to "Joseph Smith (deceased)" reads: "John Milton Bernhisel. . . gave himself to Pres[iden]t. Joseph Smith (martryed) to become his son by the law of adoption and to become a legal heir to all the blessings bestowed upon Joseph Smith pertaining to exaltations even unto the eternal God-head with a solemn covenant to observe all the rights & ordinances pertaining to the new & everlasting covenant as far as now is or shall hereafter be made known unto him." ("Book of Proxey [Sealings]," entry no. 153, p. 65, 3 February 1846).

99. Some sealings were performed after Smith's death but before endowments began in the Nauvoo temple. See, for example, the following entries from the diaries of Brigham

most of them new. The restricted nature of these temple sealings is evident in the proviso recorded in one such ceremony: "with the understanding that P. H. Young will deliver up Mary Elvira Lincoln to her Husband (I[ra]. E[lisha]. Lincoln) in the Resurrection."¹⁰⁰ At least sixty-eight of these ordinances also involved unions for time only between living couples (the first spouse and the proxy).

Included among these proxy sealings were several of Smith's plural wives who were usually sealed first to Smith for time and eternity and then for time only to the living church leader who had just stood as Smith's proxy. A number of Smith's plural marriages had also been repeated after his death but before ordinances began in the temple; some of these were repeated a second time in the temple. The record for Smith's and Sarah Ann Whitney's resealing reads that both

were sealed husband & wife for time & all eternity (Heber Chace Kimball acting as proxy for Joseph Smith deceased) by Brigham Young her Parents having given her to him for that purpose. She was also sealed to H. C. Kimball for time (His wife Vilate Kimball having presented her to him at the Alter) by Pres. B[righam]. Young in the presence of John Taylor, A[lbert]. P. Rockwood, Amasa Lyman & Jas. Young.¹⁰¹

By the time Mormons began leaving Nauvoo in mid-February 1846, they

Young and Heber C. Kimball (LDS Archives): "in the evening went to Br H[eber]. C. Kimballs. Saw sister Williams and Seald hir to hir husband F[rederick]. G. W[illiams]. Br H. C. Kimball stood as procksay" (Young, Diary, 2 September 1844); "Sister Evens was Sealled to hur Husband fore time and Eternity" (Kimball, Diary, 20 September 1844); "went to Bro Holtons and Sealled Him to his dead wife and gave the family council" (Kimball, Diary, 21 September 1844); "in the morning. went to Titus billings. seeled him to his wife" (Kimball, Diary, 2 February 1845); and "I Sealled B Sanderson and his wife fore time and Eternity this was on the Eve of the 16 he gave me three franks [francs]. he shall be blest" (Kimball, Diary, 17 May 1845).

One of the more unusual out-of-temple sealings occurred between Willard Richards and his celestial wife Alice Longstroth, who covenanted a union between themselves without the aid an outside officiator: "At 10. P.M. took Alice L.....h by the [hand] of our own free will and avow mutually acknowledge each other husband & wife, in a covenant not to be broken in time or Eternity for time & for all Eternity, to all intents & purposes as though the seal of the covenant had been placed upon us. for time & all Eternity & called upon God. & all the Holy angels—& Sarah Long—th [Willard's celestial wife and Alice's sister] to witness the same" (Richards, Diary, 23 December 1845, LDS Archives).

100. "Book of Proxey [Sealings]," entry no. 39, pp. 18-19, 18 January 1846.

101. *Ibid.*, entry no. 4, p. 2, 12 January 1846. Of course, new eternal sealings between civilly married (often in conjunction with plural marriages) were also solemnized in the temple. Consider, for example, Thomas Bullock's eternal marriage to his first wife, Henrietta Rushton, and his plural wife, Lucy C. Clayton (sister of William Clayton): "At dusk I, Henrietta and Lucy went to the Temple, dressed, sat in the Cel[estial]. Room, and shook

had performed a total of at least 369 proxy and 2,420 living eternal marriages.¹⁰²

Smith's doctrine of eternal sealings encapsulated his teachings on marriage, the family, and salvation. It promised glory to the righteous, the dead, those facing death who had not been bound to their spouses by the power of Smith's authority, and comfort to the beleaguered struggling to endure to the end. It assured the continuation in a celestial kingdom of those terrestrial joys which had first united husbands and wives. Joseph Kingsbury's elation at knowing he would join his departed wife no doubt voiced the reaction of most spouses to Smith's teachings: "[T]he full desire of my heart in having my Companion Caroline in the first Resurrection to claim her & no one have power to take her from me & we both shall be Crowned & enthroned together in the Celestial Kingdom of God Enjoying Each other's Society in all of the fulness of the Gospel of Jesus Christ & our little ones with us as is Received in th[e] blessing that President Joseph Smith Sealed upon my head."¹⁰³ Twenty-nine-year-old Thomas Bullock added of his own sealing, "I praise the Lord, for this great manifestation of his love and mercy towards me and grant that the happiness which I now enjoy may last for all eternity."¹⁰⁴

"Who is it that can not see the beauty and the excellency of celestial marriage, and having our children sealed to us?" asked Brigham Young, perhaps Smith's most loyal devotee. "What should we do without this? Were it not for what is revealed concerning the sealing ordinances, children born out of the covenant could not be sealed to their parents; children born in the covenant are entitled to the Spirit of the Lord and all the blessings of the kingdom."¹⁰⁵ Young also promised, "[B]y means of sealing powers and keys, and an everlasting covenant, the sons of men become the sons of God by regeneration, and are entitled, every man in

hands with B[righam]. Young. H[eber]. C. Kimball. O[rson]. Hyde, P[arley]. P. Pratt, A[masa]. Lyman. Went into the President's room when I and [the] two others were sealed up to eternal life, thro' time to come forth in the morn of the resurrection, and thro' all eternity. Were sealed up against all sin except the sin against the Holy Ghost and the shedding of innocent blood by A. Lyman" (Bullock, Diary, 23 January 1846, L. Tom Perry Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah). This ceremony may read as a second anointing ordinance, but Bullock was not anointed a king and a priest, his wives were not anointed to him, and his name does not appear in the official record of second anointings, "Book of Anointings" (LDS Archives).

102. Richard O. Cowan, *Temple Building Ancient and Modern* (Provo, Utah: BYU Press, 1971), 29. Proxy sealings for spouses both of whom are dead did not begin until 1855.

103. Kingsbury, "History of Joseph C. Kingsbury," 29 April 1843.

104. Bullock, Diary, 23 January 1846.

105. Brigham Young, Discourse, 23 [sic, 21] June 1874, *Journal of Discourses*, 18:249.

his order, to the privileges, exaltations, principalities and powers, kingdoms and thrones, which are held and enjoyed, by the great Father of our race."¹⁰⁶ Thus faithful Saints, sealed forever for the power of Smith's authority, knew that at his coming Christ would not find the earth completely barren.

106. Brigham Young, Discourse, 6 November 1864, *Journal of Discourses*, 10:355.